

GUIDO MORSELLI

THE AUTHOR



Guido Morselli, born in Bologna on August 15, 1912, into a wealthy upper-middle-class family, experienced a life marked by both privilege and profound personal loss. His father, Giovanni, a pharmaceutical executive and later a fascist deputy, and his mother, Olga Vincenzi, the daughter of a prominent lawyer, moved the family to Milan in 1914.

Morselli's childhood, initially peaceful, was shattered by his mother's severe illness with Spanish flu in 1922 and her subsequent death in 1924. This loss deeply affected him, compounded by his father's frequent absences and their increasingly strained relationship. A precocious but unsociable youth, Morselli found traditional schooling at Parini High School uninspiring, preferring independent study and writing. He penned early political essays as a teenager and indulged in the social scene of parties, dances, cinema, and theatre.

Despite academic struggles, he reluctantly passed his high school exams in 1931, as a private student, after failing the previous year, and enrolled in law at the University of Milan to appease his father. During this period, he began writing journalistic essays, though none were published.

Following his 1935 graduation and military service in the Alpine officers' school, Morselli traveled extensively, writing unpublished journalistic reports and stories. A brief, unsuccessful stint in advertising at Caffaro further damaged his relationship with his father. The death of his sister Luisa in 1938, at the age of twenty-seven, prompted his father to provide him with a life annuity, allowing Morselli to dedicate himself to his passions: reading, studying, and writing. He maintained a lifelong habit of diary-keeping and, though a confirmed bachelor, enjoyed numerous romantic relationships.

Morselli's prolific output of novels, short stories, and essays remained unrecognized during his lifetime, consistently rejected by Italian publishers. Notably, he authored two speculative novels: *Contro-passato prossimo* (published posthumously in 1975), which reimagines World War I with a Central Powers victory, and *Roma senza papa* (published posthumously in 1974), depicting a future Catholic Church under an unconventional Irish pope.

Driven to despair by the persistent rejections, Morselli, on July 31, 1973, received yet another rejection for his novel *Dissipatio H.G.*. He ended his life by suicide in the outbuilding of his family villa in Varese, using his Browning 7.65 pistol, which he poignantly referred to as "the girl with the black eye." His death went largely unnoticed by the press.

Ironically, the following year, Adelphi published *Roma senza papa*, sparking an editorial sensation and finally bringing him the posthumous acclaim he craved. In his will, Morselli bequeathed his extensive library to the Civic Library of Varese, creating the Guido Morselli Fund. His former home, the "pink little house" on the Gavirate hill of Santa Trinita, now houses a museum dedicated to his work, and his archives are preserved at the Center for Studies on the Manuscript Tradition of Modern and Contemporary Authors at the University of Pavia.